



**EU INTEGRATION & COMMON SECURITY: MAKING IT HAPPEN**

The 6th annual meeting of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

20-21 November 2014, Batumi, Georgia

## **Recommendations of the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly of EaP Civil Society Forum on better protection of minority rights in the Eastern Partnership process**

Three sets of documents outlining the way forward to association with the EU: the Actions Plans, Visa Liberalization Action Plans (VLAP) and Country Progress Reports for Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia refer to both human and minority rights. All Action Plans contain a standardized reference to ensure or to strengthen the “respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities”. The VLAPs set out two consecutive levels of benchmarks - the policy framework and implementation measures. Citizens’ rights including the protection of minorities are a specific component of the fourth block of all VLAPs. Finally, all country-specific measures for Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine bear particular reference to ensuring the rights of minorities.

### **Recommendations**

#### **To the EU**

##### **At the policy level**

1. Increase efforts to ensure that minority and indigenous rights are a distinctive part of the political association, with greater visibility in forthcoming presidencies. Progress Reports should include a detailed assessment of key issues on the rights and situation of minorities and indigenous groups, and systematically follow them up in each annual report. Similar measures should be adopted in related documents such as VLAP reports and Action Plans to ensure inclusion and systematic follow-up of minority concerns
2. Integrate anti-discrimination efforts in areas such as legislation and institutional structures more effectively with minority and indigenous concerns. Direct more attention to the effective implementation of legislation on the protection of persons belonging to national minorities and indigenous groups.

##### **With regard to EU financial assistance**

3. Link the allocation of EU financial assistance to clear minority targets and benchmarks.
4. Insist on the collection of disaggregated data by national statistical bureaus and by relevant ministries in key reform sectors that receive EU budget support.

##### **On the inclusion and strengthening of minority organizations**

5. Make additional funding available, earmarked for the strengthening of minority organizations to build capacity for participation in relevant EaP processes, including the Civil Society Forum and national platforms.
6. Ensure that minority and indigenous CSOs with limited absorption capacities are able to access funding directly through small grants and assistance schemes on matching grants, and are included in broader sectoral projects as key partners.

#### **To EU Member States**

7. Ensure the systematic inclusion of minority rights in bilateral relations with EaP countries.